



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

V.—*NOTICES OF CHINA*, by PADRE SERRA.*—Communicated by J. F. DAVIS,
Esq., M.R.A.S.

Read July 17, 1830.

No. 1.

Nomination of the present Emperor TAOU-KWANG in 1821.

IN China the Imperial dignity is not the certain inheritance of the Prince next in succession, but of him whom the deceased Monarch may have left named in a note, which is deposited in a casket: the reigning Prince having the power of preferring not only the younger sons to the eldest (though this should be the son of the Empress and those the children of concubines), but also his grandsons. Women have but little influence on this nomination in the present dynasty, but in some of the former they have exercised it so far as to promote a concubine to the dignity of Empress Mother, obliging the latter to abdication, or imprisonment.

The present Empress Mother is not the parent of the reigning Prince, though she has two sons who, at the death of their father, were more than twenty years of age. These are superior in personal appearance to the Emperor, who is thin and toothless, and the youngest of them is tolerably well educated; but the eldest is a drunkard. The second is also extremely immoral and fond of plays, for which purpose he entertains a number of young companions. Though the Emperor, their father, united in his own person all the vices of these his sons, he preferred his present Majesty for a successor, as being the most virtuous. Some, however, attribute this preference to the good conduct evinced by TAOU-KWANG in the rebellion

* Padre Serra was a Missionary of the College of San José de Macao, and Assistant in the Imperial Observatory, who resided in Peking from 1804 till 1827, during which period some matters of great secrecy were imparted to him by a Wang (*i. e.* a Regulus, or little king), his intimate friend.

of 1813,* when with an arquebuse he slew two or three of the rebels and intimidated the remainder, who had already penetrated within the precincts of the palace, for which he obtained due eulogies from his father in the public decrees.

The former Empress Mother, whose son now fills the throne, having expired in a paroxysm of rage caused by the present Empress Mother, who was then a concubine; the latter, on her elevation, ill-treated the prince, so far as to make him remain two hours prostrate, on one occasion, when, according to custom, he went in the morning to do her homage. These causes have, however, proved insufficient to prevent TAOU-KWANG, since he has ascended the throne, from continuing the customary ceremony, at first daily, and now every five days.

* On the 18th of October 1813, as the Emperor KEA-KING was about to enter Peking, on his return from a summer's excursion to *Jeho* (literally *Thermopylæ*, or "The Hot Springs"), a party of conspirators entered the Imperial palace, and kept possession of a part of it for some time. The first intimation of this occurrence was conveyed in the following Proclamation from the Emperor:—

"Proclamation—to announce a revolt which has taken place, and to inculcate myself.—Eighteen years have elapsed since, possessed of only inferior virtue, I looked up and received with profound veneration, the throne from my imperial father; after which I dared not resign myself to ease, or neglect the affairs of government. I had but just ascended the throne, when the sect of the *P'ê-lên* (white-lily) seduced into a state of confusion four provinces, and the people suffered more than my feelings can bear to express. I ordered my generals to go against them, and after eight years' conflict reduced them to submission. I then hoped that with my children (the people) I should have enjoyed increasing pleasure and repose. On the sixth of the eighth moon (in 1813) the sect of *T'hên-le* (celestial reason), a band of vagabonds, suddenly created disturbance, and caused much injury, extending from the district of *Chang-yuen* in the province of Pe-che-lee, to the district of *Tsaou* in Shan-tong. I hastened to order W'UN, the viceroy of Peking, to lead forth an army to exterminate them and restore peace. This affair, however, yet remained at the distance of a thousand *le* from the capital. But suddenly, on the fifteenth of the ninth moon, rebellion arose under my own arm. The calamity has sprung up in my own house. A banditti of upwards of seventy men, of the sect *T'hên-le*, violated the prohibited gate, and entered withinside: they wounded the guard, and rushed into the inner palace. Four rebels were seized and bound; three others ascended the wall with a flag. My imperial second son (the present Emperor) seized a matchlock and shot two of them; my nephew killed the third. For this deliverance I am indebted to the energies of my second son. The princes and chief officers of the Loong-tsoong gate led forth troops, and, after two days' and one night's severe exertion, completely routed the rebels." The paper goes on to cast the blame on his own remissness, and on the vices of his delegates; and to call for a general reformation.—J. F. D.

No. 2.

Successive gradation of the Princes of the Blood, and their corresponding incomes.

The Princes who are not exempt are required to frequent the schools, and when they are exempt they lose all title to the crown, and are made privileged Reguli, or nobles of the first class, excepting the youngest, who is of the second. This gradation descends with all one degree each generation, till having descended five generations they are made simple Princes of the House; calling themselves those of the *yellow-girdle*, which they are entitled to wear, as a distinction from the rest of the people, being privileged in all contentions therewith. From this degradation are excepted the eight families, and some others by especial favour, as it happened to a grandson of KIEN-LUNG, to whom he granted the first grade for ten lives.

A Regulus of the first rank receives annually from the Exchequer (besides his private establishment) 10,000 pieces,* 10,000 sacks of rice, and 360 servants. These are taken from the three tribes or divisions of families who live within the district of the Court, which is furnished with three parallel walls. They are paid by the Exchequer, and sixty of them are graduated of the third order (there are nine ranks among the Chinese gentry) and one of these is Steward of the Household, appointed by the Emperor, to whom he may prefer a complaint against the Regulus. In all, the expense to the State of a Regulus of the first rank is 60,000 or 70,000 pieces; of one of the second rank, half that sum; of one of the third rank, a third part of the same; and so on, down to the simple princes of the blood, who from their fifteenth year are allowed three pieces a-month and two sacks of rice. They are also allowed 100 pieces when they marry and 120 for a funeral; from which they take occasion to maltreat their wives, because when one dies they receive the allowance for her interment, and the dowry of the second wife, whom they take immediately.

The soldiery receive similar but less expensive aids, which are deducted from their pay. The Reguli occasionally hold certain offices, as that of Presidents of the Military Boards, but receive no other salary therefrom than what they extort by the sale of places, or inferior posts; by usurping the salaries of vacancies, especially in the Militia, or dispensing with the

* The value of the *taél*, the Portuguese coin, is 3s. 6d. The Chinese *taél* is 6s. 8d.

soldiers' exercise. This remark is equally applicable to all the great officers (principally Tartars), who only receive salaries from the principal office which they fill; and when they are punished by stoppage of the salary, this is not understood to withhold all the pay of their principal office, if their deficiency have not occurred therein, but only such part of it as corresponds to the office in which they have been deficient. Besides the salaries, all officers receive certain aids, which about the Court are moderate, but in the provinces far exceed the principal salary, and are never subject to fine.

No. 3.

Magistracy, and Administration of the Court and its District.

Chief Magistracy of the Court and the Palace. This, like all the other tribunals of the Court, is a Board composed of a President and six assessors. It has jurisdiction over the whole district and superintendants of the Court, and also governs the three tribes, of which we have already spoken; the eunuchs, who amount to about 5,000; the servants of the Court, who are estimated at the same number, and ten departments in the Palace, which are the following:—

First. The Master of the Horse and his assistants, who have charge of the imperial stables.

Second. The Superintendant of the Ornaments, who takes care of the boots, harness, and housings.

Third. The Superintendant of Woods and Forests, who looks after the lakes, rivers, and woods of the imperial district.

Fourth. The Keeper of the Wardrobe, who has the care of the head-dresses and tassels.

Fifth. The Criminal Judge, who tries the causes within the imperial district.

Sixth. The Chief Butler.

Seventh. The High Steward, who has charge of the imperial inheritances, with 360 bailiffs under him.

Eighth. The Superintendant of the letting of Crown Lands.

Ninth. The High Steward of the Household, who distributes pay and provisions to the officers of the Court.

Tenth. The Intendant of the Active Presents* of the Emperor.

* *Presentes activos*, in the Portuguese original.

Eleventh. The Guardian of the forty-eight Deposits of Passive Presents,* which office is filled by the principal eunuch, who is never above the fourth rank. This is an office confined within the precincts of the Palace, because the last dynasty was displaced by the surrender of one, who was also Intendant of Police.

No. 4.

Concubines and Servants of the Palace.

Every third year the Emperor takes a review of such of the daughters of Tartar officers and men of rank, as may have reached the age of twelve, (twenty years ago the daughters of all the Tartars living about the Court were reviewed), and from among these, of all whose families he is reputed the common father, he chooses wives or concubines. Those who are not chosen at the third review, become exempt. The servants, who amount to about 5,000, are chosen from the three tribes; the girls of fourteen present themselves at a review taken by the Emperor annually, and those who, after the third review remain unchosen, are exempt. Those who have been selected are restored to liberty when they have reached the twenty-fifth year of their age, unless the Emperor shall have had children by any of them, in which case he disposes of them as he pleases, making them illegal concubines; the legal, those acknowledged by the Observatory, being only seven. Hence the late Emperor, when congratulated by his father-in-law on the birth of a son (born of a servant), banished him with a nominal appointment. The present monarch refused to recall one of these servants who had been expelled with public disgrace when pregnant, through the jealousy of a favourite concubine, but at length, being apprized a second time by the magistrate that she had given birth to a son, he ordered her to be admitted into the Palace with her child.

No. 5.

The Customs and Revenue.

The most lucrative offices, as those of the Customs, are filled by persons selected from the three tribes within the Court district, among which there are some families of extraordinary wealth. The Canton Custom-house, in

* *Presentes passivos.*

particular, which is at the head of most of those in the country, is always governed by one of these. His duty is to pay into the Exchequer 1,470,000 taels, or ounces of silver, and to make three presents: one in the fifth moon, another on the birth-day of the Emperor, and a third at the end of the year, which amount to 800,000 pieces in value; consisting, principally of European articles. This mode of fixing the tribute is somewhat singular, it being according to an estimate made by the Judges. These and other tributes taken into the account, the revenue, according to the almanack, may be estimated at 150,000,000 of *cruzados** in specie and grain, of which latter 10,000 boat loads of 1,100 sacks in each are taken to Peking, and the rest is laid up in numerous granaries in the provinces, for the maintenance of the troops and succour of the people in the years of famine, which are very frequent in some parts of China. On such occasions the grain is distributed gratis, or sold at a small price; the Emperor also does not exact the land-tax when the scarcity is great. As there are years in which some officers represent that they must lose by the year being bad or the revenue poor, the Government takes the precaution of appointing, for such years, the persons who have served in the most productive. The officers of Chinese Customs are far less rigorous than those of Europe, being content to receive an oral or written testimony as to the goods transported, without opening chests or bales, unless when there is cause for suspecting a contraband traffic, which, in the interior of China, is very rare. As to the taxes, they conform themselves strictly to the instructions of the Exchequer at Peking, which are published with this view.

No. 6.

The Emperor KIA-KING, Father of the reigning Prince.

Daily, and without fail, he transacted the duties of his station; gave audience early in the morning—from which no Emperor excuses himself, unless by reason of serious illness—and, having despatched the business submitted to him, he retired to play on instruments and sing with his comedians; after which he drank to intoxication. In this state the remainder of the day was passed; and at night he proceeded with some of his

* The new *cruzado* in silver is worth 2s. 6d. According to this statement, the revenue of China would amount, in silver and grain, to only £18,750,000. I have given an account of the Almanack above referred to, and a detailed statement of the amount of the taxes, in the "Asiatic Journal" for 1817. pp. 333-4, 430-1.—W. H.

players, masked, to the seraglio. And the fact is not unworthy of remark, that his two younger sons bear not the slightest resemblance to each other in face or person: the one being tall and thin, the other short and fat. Such was the Emperor's attachment to players that, when he went to offer sacrifice in the temples of heaven, earth, and the sun, which he did in the evening, he took them with him. This, and other circumstances, being noticed by the celebrated Syndic and Minister, SUNG-KEUN, in a memorial, his Majesty was highly incensed, and ordered the offender to be summoned before him. On being asked if he was the author of this admonition, he firmly acknowledged that he was. He was then asked what punishment he deserved? and he answered, "Quartering." They told him to choose some other; whereupon he said, "Let me be beheaded;" and on a third command, he chose to be strangled. After these three answers, he was told to retire; and on the following day they appointed him Governor of E-le (the country of the banished): thus acknowledging his rectitude, though unable to bear his censure. Having been recalled to Court, and given fresh offence by his reproofs, he was degraded to the ranks of the watch; but was afterwards restored to his dignity by the present Emperor.

No. 7.

Of the Emperor YUNG CHING, and of the Lama Priests.

Though the succession to the throne depends on the arbitrary nomination of the reigning prince, that does not always prevent usurpations. An instance of this was seen in the succession of YUNG CHING to his father, the great KANG-HE. The prince nominated by him was the fourth; but this latter being in Tartary at the period of the Emperor's somewhat sudden demise, YUNG CHING, who was a privileged Regulus, entered the palace and seized the billet of nomination. Before the figure which he there found, he set a sign of *ten*, and thus made it appear that he, the fourteenth prince, was the one nominated. He possessed himself of the sceptre, and ordered his brother to be arrested and imprisoned, in a place which is standing to this day, four leagues to the north of Peking, and in which it is said that he died. There are offices and posts held by this Emperor, when Regulus, which are said to descend to the three tribes and divisions within the district of the Court. His palace has been converted into a pagoda, which is now inhabited by three hundred priests of Budha, who, within the

capital, besides others, have three principal pagodas, into whose chiefs the Tartars believe that the soul of the great Lama of Tibet has passed. There are many pagodas of Budha to the north of Peking and throughout all Tartary, all built and maintained by the public exchequer. One of the above-named chiefs, who is generally son of a Regulus, has further honours, and the revenue of a Regulus of the first class; all the others are paid, according to their rank, from the exchequer. All this is done for them because they retain in subjection the Tartars of the West, who consist of forty-eight principalities. Their respect for the priests is unaccountable, and thus it is that the latter, who go in June on a visitation to Tartary, on their return in October bring with them whatever the Tartars have of most value, especially cattle. It is said that the dynasty will pass to them; but the Chinese despise them exceedingly on account of their immorality, and of their being all, or nearly all, Tartars.